

Who Remembers... Mitchell's Fish & Chips?

Here is another installment in our *Who Remembers?* series. You can browse previous articles by using the search bar on the right or by clicking **here**. These articles are strolls down memory lane. In some cases, the buildings, but new businesses have replaced them. In other instances, the buildings or even the properties have been razed. Instead of a building, it may be a TV show, personality, or commercial that no one longer exists. Either way, it can't stop us from taking the Memory Lane stroll!

As always we would rather this be a discussion. No one knows this area better than those who grew up here! Please, leave constructive criticism, feedback, and corrections. We'd love to hear your anecdotes. Please share!

My family has always been a family of gypsies. We've had members that have grown up on sailboats circumnavigating the world, currently spread out across Sicily, England, Hawaii, Florida, New Hampshire, and Australia. While I was born in Plymouth, I moved to Duxbury, then Kingston, then various places in New Bedford, to Rochester, back to New Bedford, then Fairhaven, Florida, California, back to New Bedford, to Germany and England, then back to New Bedford, then Acushnet. That's the abbreviated version.

Point being that I have lived all over the South Coast and, assuming my memory is functioning properly, lived in 5-6 different houses in New Bedford. One of my favorite places was 868 County Street, 2 houses down from what used to be Kinyon-Campbell School. For a kid, it was a fantastic spot – the snowplows would pile 12' or higher snow banks into the corners of the parking lot at the school. There was a pizza/sub shop

across the street, Bob & Eileen's Variety on the corner, the Car Barn when it was just that – a car salvage yard – where we could toss a football.

Of course, a few blocks down was Hayden McFadden school ground with its baseball field and a place to play street hockey right under the overpass.

Bob & Eileen's was **the** spot to get penny candy. I've had a LOT of fond memories of that mom & pop – just staring at that wall of Mary Janes, Red Hot Dollars, Swedish Fish, dots on paper or whatever they were called, Bit-O-Honeys, Squirrel Net Zippers, et al.

On the opposite corner was a Mitchell's Fish and Chips – and old-fashioned English battered fish and chips shop. Now, maybe all things are better when you reminisce, but I remember absolutely loving this place. Now, I'm traveling down memory lane with a broken brain and on top of that, decades have passed so please correct me if I'm wrong on something.

I recall they had irregular hours and were only open 2-3 days per week. I can't recall how large it was inside since our family always called ahead and did take-out...or as the English would say "take-away." There was a man who I vaguely recall (Bill?), that would open a steel gate or shutter and hand over your order wrapped in newspaper, just like the tradition "across the pond."

Imagine that happening today? Getting your food wrapped in a newspaper? The city would incur their wrath with fines and/or shutting Mitchell's down. Readers have made comments about the owner's name being Brian and eventually his son taking over. I always wondered if the current mayor was related to the family.

Your order would usually be accompanied with tea cakes and a small bread roll. You could order a drink called The Suicide which was every flavor of soda mixed into one. In that day and

age – the mid to late 70s – a small order of fish and chips was a whopping \$.35 and a large order would set you back \$.50. Sorry, I should have pre-empted that statement with a “Are you sitting down?”

Taste? Maybe it was that faded memory over decades or tainted perception from being a kid and falling for the coolness of the newspaper wrapping, but I remember it being absolutely delicious and you never had to twist this kid’s arm to eat dinner. If it tasting good was a product of faulty memory or perception, I don’t care. It was real to me, damnit.

While I had only ever been to this fish and chips shop, there has been mention of another shop on Cove Street – perhaps a different era? If you know, please chime in.

Anyhow, there are a lot of things from yesteryear that I wish were brought back, i.e. barter, stockades, pillories, penny candy that cost a penny....and Mitchell’s newspaper-wrapped fish and chips.

Imagine a return to those prices of yesteryear? That would be the Dog’s bollocks, mate.